



# Fish Consumption Advice for the Sheboygan River Area of Concern



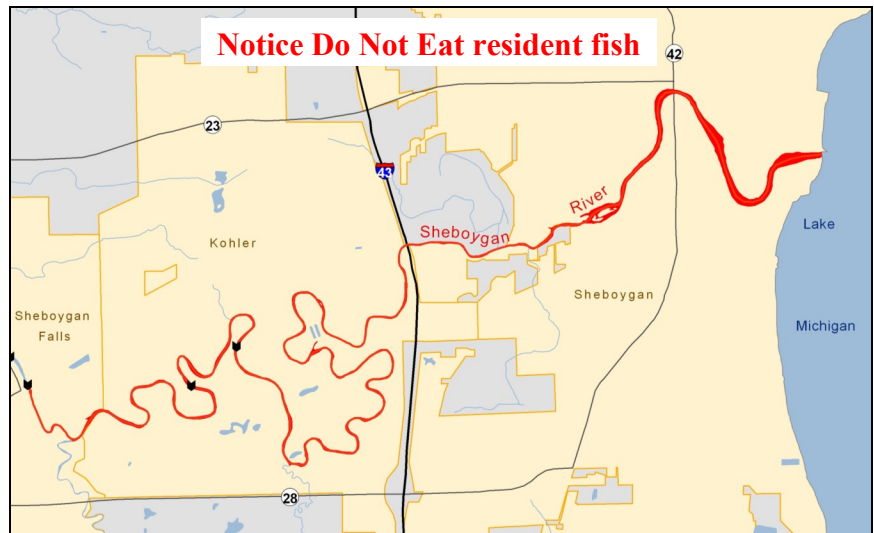
## Why should I eat fish?

Fish are a nutritious family food. Modest amounts of fish can provide health benefits, although little additional benefit is gained by eating more than 1-2 servings per week. Some of the benefits of catching and eating fish include:

- Low cost and fun to catch your own fish
- Low in fat, yet high in protein
- Great source of vitamins, minerals, and omega-3 fatty acids

However, any resident fish (fish that live in the river) caught in the Sheboygan River below Sheboygan Falls Dam should not be consumed due to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Follow the Lake Michigan PCB advisory for any trout or salmon because they mostly live in Lake Michigan but come up river during spawning (see table on page 2 for advice on trout and salmon from Lake Michigan).



## What are Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)?

PCBs are man-made chemicals that were used in electrical equipment, industrial processes, and manufacturing and recycling of carbonless copy paper. PCBs were discharged into the Sheboygan River for decades before it was discovered that these chemicals build up in the environment and pose health risks to humans and wildlife. Restrictions on PCB use, manufacturing, and disposal began in the 1970's, but PCBs remain in the sediment of the river. Efforts are underway to remediate contaminants in the sediments of the Sheboygan River. For more information please visit <http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/sheboygan/>

## Tell me about PCBs in fish and what types of fish are safe to eat

- PCBs are resistant to degradation and bioaccumulate to higher concentrations through the food chain
- Younger, smaller fish have lower amounts of PCBs than larger, older predator fish
- PCBs accumulate in the fatty tissue, so fatty fish such as carp and catfish have higher levels of PCBs.
- No fish that lives in the Sheboygan River below the Sheboygan Falls Dam are currently safe to eat.

## Why are the health risks?

PCBs are stored in your body fat for years. Your health risk may increase as you eat more fish that are high in PCBs. Health risks include:

- Developmental impairments in children
- Harmful to the reproductive system
- Associated with a higher risk of cancer
- Harmful to the immune system
- Alters thyroid hormones



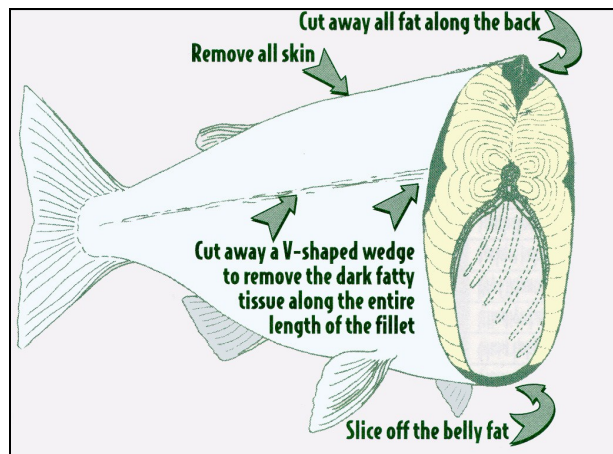
Photo by Lake Michigan Work Unit

Sheboygan River at Esslingen Park

## How should I prepare and cook my fish?

Proper cleaning and cooking techniques can reduce PCB levels by up to 70%. Follow the following preparation techniques:

- Fillet your fish
- Remove the skin
- Trim away belly fat, fat on the backsides and fatty dark meat
- Do not eat the eggs
- Bake, broil, or grill
- Discard all liquids and frying oils



| Meal Size              |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Weight (lbs)           | Precooked fish (oz.) |
| 225                    | 12                   |
| 154                    | 8                    |
| 77                     | 4                    |
| 40                     | 2                    |
| 3.0 oz ~ deck of cards |                      |







The size of your meal depends on how much you weigh. Use the table to left as a serving size guideline as you follow the fish consumption advice in the table below.

Women of childbearing age and children under 15 should be especially careful to follow the meal sizes and space fish meals out according to the advisory tables.

## SHEBOYGAN RIVER Downstream of Sheboygan Falls to Lake Michigan

**DO NOT EAT ANY FISH  
(SEE TROUT AND SALMON BELOW)**

## LAKE MICHIGAN

| Eat no more than<br>1 meal /week   | Eat no more than<br>1 meal /month  |   | Eat no more than<br>1 meal every 2 months  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <br>Steelhead (0-22") | <br>Steelhead (22+) | <br>Brown trout (0-28") | <br>Brown Trout (28+) |
|  | <br>Coho salmon     | <br>Chinook salmon      |  |

See the WDNR's website or the *Choose Wisely* booklet for updates on fish safe-eating guidelines. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/eatyourcatch.html>